

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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CHAPTER XL. THE GREAT BEAR.

OF all the popular houses in the neighbourhood, the Warren took precedence, now that it was thrown open to the public. Most of the gentry had never even been within the gates of the place, so that curiosity mingled with the wish to make acquaintance with the charming widow and her daughters. If Mrs. Gordon had kept her ascendancy at Longham when she was poor, she found it easy to do so now that she was "Mrs. Gordon of the Warren." The neighbourhood of the camp much helped out the pleasant afternoons. There was always tennis, tea, and conversation. Besides, the grounds were extensive, it was so easy to ask the gentlemen to come round and see the place, and Minnie was always ready to act cicerone on these occasions, though when alone with her mother and sisters she would not stir a step to do a message that "Beatrice could do just as well."

Poor Beatrice found herself in no way a privileged person on account of her engagement; Minnie's jealousy, though conquered as far as wishing to marry Captain Grant was concerned, was not smothered as far as actions went. Beatrice's only consolation was writing to Colin. Even her mother lost a certain interest in her; she was comfortably settled and need give no more anxiety; the engagement could run its course, then the trousseau and the wedding would have to follow. The trousseau would

cost a hundred pounds or more, and the wedding would be a great fuss, so both these events were put off, as the widow found that, after doing up the old house, she had very little ready money to spare.

One day came the episode of the Curate of Longham's offer. Minnie received the letter which had cost the little man so much thought and so many sleepless nights with a mixture of amusement and annoyance. It was the first real offer she had received, so in spite of herself she felt flattered; to have a life's devotion, a heart, honest and good, laid at your feet would move any woman who was not positively heartless. Minnie said, "Poor fellow," pitied him and herself, fancied that he might have known she only "liked him," and that he might have guessed that she didn't mean to be a poor man's wife. Even in the days of poverty she would have said no; now she said, "How could he ask me?" Her mother was shown the letter, Minnie's lovely eyes shed a few tears, and she said that it was very hard on her to have to refuse, and would her mother write for her. Mrs. Gordon said:

"Poor, dear fellow, how could he be so foolish?" and wrote off by return of post, so that Mr. Phillips had not even the comfort of having a letter written by Minnie herself, which, doubtless, he would have kept in a pocket-book next to his heart, as some men have been known to do as long as they lived. As it was, he threw Mrs. Gordon's letter into the fire, fully recognised for the first time that the Gordons were no better than other Longham folk, however much they had set themselves above it, and the next day begged his Vicar to release him. He must say good-bye to the place now for ever, to those elaborate dinners, and to the sleepy and critical con-

gregation whose affection he had not gained in the least, and he would plunge into London work and back slums unto his life's end. There, if anywhere, a man could forget his own troubles by considering the miseries of his fellow-creatures; there, if anywhere, his words might fall into ground not too much hedged in with educated self-satisfaction and lodge in the soil which had been watered with tears of penitence.

So, after a time, he went away, quite believing that he had wasted his energies and his happiness at Longham. Had any one told him then that in after years the people of Longham would beg him to accept the living in recognition of his past energetic labours, he would have disbelieved the prophecy, which, however, came to pass. Now he could only exclaim: "Can these dead bones live?"

Minnie Gordon, had she known it, would have been little pleased to be classed in the category of dead bones. She, too, had had a good man's love offered to her, and because he had not so many hundred a year she could not feel any love for him.

Not more than four miles from the Warren lived Squire Laurence, a rough hunting squire, who had been known to be often the worse for the old wine in his cellar, but who was, in spite of that, as clever and acute a man of business as any lawyer within twenty miles round. He had known James Gordon, had even attended some of his dinner parties, but had drawn the line there. There was no visiting, for his wife was a quiet, meek soul, with all the virtues necessary for a happy life, and yet doomed to misery.

To assuage other troubles she had cultivated the mania for saving. Her husband approved of this peculiarity, as he himself was no spendthrift, and the thought she expended on saving a few pence or shillings, as the case might be, really filled up her time. The only son was a fine, handsome young man, devoted, like his father, to hunting, and with no thought beyond. Money he spent almost recklessly, that is, when he had it. People said he was a good fellow, and would be very rich; young ladies treated him with gentle playfulness, a line of conduct he did not understand and called "simpering." He meant to marry some day, but no girl had ever made his heart beat fast or caused him a sleepless night, so he concluded there was time enough. His father talked with a pleasant banter of the time "when my son marries," and

his mother now and then put aside some house-linen towards the time when a wedding present would be necessary, thinking that linen was really the best thing to give because all the mothers in old days did so, and old ways were so much better than new fashions. She once fancied it might be cheaper to get it spun in the village, but found this impracticable, so sent to Ireland for the linen, because there it was cheaper; though the carriage of the goods made this really more expensive.

Poor Mrs. Laurence: when she made her first call at the Warren, and saw the three Miss Gordons walk in, her heart sank within her. She had a mother's presentiment that dear Harry would make shipwreck on one of these rocks. Scylla and Charybdis were now personified before her. She was delighted to hear that one at all events was engaged. Mrs. Gordon proclaimed the fact eagerly, for fear that any one else should make the mistake of falling in love with Beatrice at first sight.

"Dear Harry" came one day, much against the grain, and only because the Squire wanted to beg Mrs. Gordon to sell a bit of heath land that James Gordon had bought away from his house. Harry was shy and hated new faces, but of course his fate met him just at the hall door. Minnie was starting on one of her expeditions round the grounds, attended by two officers. Very pretty and graceful she looked, having thrown a small black lace shawl round her shoulders, her head was a little thrown back, her large, softly shaded eyes looked up innocently as one white hand held her hat, in danger from a sudden gust of wind. It was in this attitude that she was introduced to Harry Laurence, who was on horseback by his father's side.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Gordon," shouted the Squire—he always shouted as if all the world were deaf and all the actors foolish—"but is Mrs. Gordon at home? I want to speak a word to her."

"She is on the lawn, the other side of the house. Would you go and see her? I will ring for the groom."

"Thank you. Well, I will get down. My son Harry, Miss Gordon, a young scamp." The Squire roared at his own joke, and slapped his son's shoulder. Harry Laurence was at the moment looking down on Miss Gordon, and felt inclined to dismount as well as his father, for Minnie rang the stable bell, and then

walked away with the officers, saying she would soon return.

"Miss Gordon is a stunner," remarked Harry, as he and his father waited for the groom.

"A stunner! Well, yes, a pretty girl. I dare say she knows it. That was Colonel Dacre and his son; I dare say these young officers like to idle away their time here. But you must see the mother, Harry; in her way she is quite as good-looking as her daughters, upon my word she is."

However, Harry did not back up this opinion when he had conquered his shyness and accompanied his father to the terrace, which overlooked the valley, and where ornamental garden-chairs were scattered about. Mrs. Gordon was pouring out afternoon tea, and Frances and Beatrice were helping her. Harry found himself in the middle of a circle of pretty women, whose courteous manners and uncountrified ways made him think for the first time in his life that he was too bearish to appear among them.

Frances sat down near him and made small talk to him; but every now and then he looked out, hoping Minnie would come back, which she did in due time, and did not fail to notice that the Squire's son upset his chair in trying to make room for her. The officers were all very well, very amusing, and full of compliments; but then there were but a few of them who had money, and, of course, those had married very early "mere nobodies"—that is, the mere nobodies had married them.

Squire Laurence was famous for his riches and for nothing else, except, perhaps, his loud voice and his cleverness at driving good bargains; and that very afternoon, as Minnie sat near Harry, amused at his awkward attempts at conversation, she contemplated the possibility of the son falling in love with her.

"Do you ever ride, Miss Gordon?" said Henry Laurence, at last, having failed to show a knowledge of any of the well-known subjects of conversation.

Minnie hid her smiles well enough, and at last found out it was the hunting-field that Harry knew all about. Every nook, every hedge and short cut, every cover where the fox might be or had been for the last ten seasons, there Harry was at home.

"I should like to ride very much, but I don't suppose mother will be able to mount me; besides, I could not go alone.

Perhaps when my brother comes home, he might go with me."

"When will that be?"

"We hope he will come back for my youngest sister's wedding—she is going to marry an old Indian officer."

"It should be a young one," said Harry, glad that Minnie was not the youngest.

"Chacun à son goût," smiled Minnie, and poor Harry hoped the words were not interrogative. French had never entered his dull brains. But Minnie Gordon did, all too soon. Alas, for the poor mother and sisters having taken in the idea that he was in love with Minnie, Harry's great tall figure was to be seen at the Warren on all occasions. He came with the same dogged perseverance that he displayed about hunting. His own mother knew at once that her fears had been realised, and she hastened to visit her store of linen.

Minnie, in the meantime, was in no hurry. Henry Laurence might come and go for some time longer, for she had not at all made up her mind. This time the money was sure enough, but then even Minnie recoiled before that mass of stolidity. It wants courage to marry money and no brains. In the meantime, he was good enough for a devoted slave. Mrs. Gordon allowed her to do as she pleased; she pronounced Harry "a good fellow," but she really dreaded his remarks, there was so little point in them!

Frances for the moment had no time to think of lovers; besides, being more sensible than Minnie, she knew she must wait till Minnie was married to think about them. She was content to enjoy her new comforts in peace.

One day Mrs. Gordon and Frances were seated on the terrace expecting home the two others, who had gone for a drive, when Harry Laurence appeared for the third time that week. There was no getting rid of him till Minnie came, so they made up their minds to be civil to him, and he stretched out his long legs and tried to think of something to say. Poor fellow, no one knew the noble efforts he made to find a subject apart from hunting.

"I suppose Miss Minnie is coming in to tea?" he began.

"Oh, yes, we always gather then, for people drop in. Captain Hinton comes up to-day." Harry at once hated the Captain, and called him an impudent coxcomb, because he had talked to Minnie for fully an hour without stopping last time he had come to see her.

"Do you know him?" asked Frances.

"No, I know very few of the officers," he said, rather sulkily, whereupon Mrs. Gordon hastened to smooth over "the big bear."

"It is so amusing to see how jealous you civilians and officers are of each other. Does it all hang on the coloured cloth? You are, and others are, I believe, longing for the time to come back when you may wear satin waistcoats and knee breeches." Playfulness was lost on the Great Bear; he could but take in one idea at a time, and that idea was that, whether Minnie's family liked him or not, he meant to marry her.

"I don't care about fine clothes at all," he said, looking down on his own very rough garments. "I suppose girls generally look at men's clothes first, though."

"No, indeed they don't," said Frances.

"Anyhow," said the youth, going back to his one idea, "I am awfully glad Mr. James Gordon took it into his head to die so as to make room for you."

"Thank you," smiled Mrs. Gordon.

"A very queer fellow—never asked any ladies to his house. I wonder what's become of his girls?" Mrs. Gordon looked up now really distressed.

"Pray, Mr. Laurence, don't mention that subject to Minnie or Beatrice. It was, as you must know, a painful story, and I don't want them to hear anything about it."

"I beg your pardon," stammered Harry, getting very red and feeling he had done something awfully wrong. "Of course, I know it was all a mess; but, upon my word, they were pretty girls. Not that I ever spoke to them in my life, but I saw them in church once or twice."

"Yes, poor things, they were good-looking. I saw them, and I have cared for their well-being."

"Awfully good of you, I'm sure. Of course I shan't mention it again."

"Oh, Frances knows all about it; but my younger daughters are too—too—"

The wheels of the pony chaise were heard. Harry jumped up to go to the front door, so as to help the ladies to get out. There he saw Minnie looking so pretty and radiant that he felt inclined to jump into the carriage and drive away with her at once. Restraining himself, however, he only took her hand and helped her to descend.

"I've been waiting for you ever so long," he said, in a low voice, to which Minnie answered, sweetly:

"Oh, have you? I'm so glad you have come, for some officers are coming to play tennis."

Under his breath, Harry said: "Hang the officers!"

THE AUSTRALIAN IRRIGATION COLONIES.

A VIEW of Australia as the garden of the world is to most people new and rather strange. True we might have heard in early days of Australia Felix, but the title seemed hardly borne out by subsequent experience. It was Felix for the sheep-owner, for the wealthy squatter, and later on Felix enough for the successful digger—the Infelix, perhaps, was the more general lot—and it might be Felix, too, for the enterprising merchant, and for cannie people generally, principally Scotch, who may be trusted to do well anywhere, but for the bulk of English settlers it has shown itself only another England, without frost and snow, but with more heat and dust, where work is as hard as in the mother country, and the results no more certain. The contrasts between wealth and poverty are as sharp and cruel in one case as the other; the overcrowding of a helpless population has been felt almost as acutely in Melbourne as in London; and if agriculture has not spelt ruin to the Australian farmer, as in too many cases to his English brother, his labours have brought only a moderate return. While the progress of the Australian colonies has been marvellous in the past, with immense developement in many directions, yet there has been no such field afforded for the surplus population of the mother country as the immense extent of cultivable land—of which only an edge has been nibbled at—the splendid climate, and the general fertility of the soil seemed to promise.

The great enemy of the shepherd, as well as the husbandman, has been drought. Australia is a thirsty land, and its rainfall is irregular, and at times and in places altogether deficient. It is in this respect that the mention of irrigation colonies sounds so promising. With a genial climate and fertile soil there needs only the additional factor of moisture to bring about the most marvellous results. But irrigation implies something to irrigate with, and the river system of Australia generally is but meagre. Yet there is one

lucky corner of the continent where every advantage seems to be concentrated—a charming country of hill and dale watered by sufficient streams, with rich pastures and smiling farms. Such is the character of the best parts of Victoria. The country is a kind of Australian Devonshire, but even more happily favoured. Fruit gardens abound with all the fruits of the temperate and sub-tropic zone. The apple thrives as in Devon, and the apricot in the fullest richness; the almond and the fig-tree flourish beside the humble but useful gooseberry and currant-bushes. Peaches are excellent, grapes flourish everywhere, the silk-worm mulberry grows well. As for cherries, pears, plums, quinces, walnuts, and such familiar fruits of our home orchards, they have made themselves still more at home in the colony, and so have strawberries and raspberries. Already in Victoria are planted twelve thousand acres of fruit gardens, and already the colony has begun to export jams and tinned fruits. Then there are ten thousand acres of vineyards, the reputation of which for wines is growing and increasing. Great skill and judgement have been applied to the culture of the vine, and the most famous vineyards in Europe have yielded cuttings which have taken root and flourished in their adopted country with even more vigour and luxuriance than the parent stems in their native habitat. The rich tertiary soil of the colony, where it is found in its fresh virgin state, in the shape of a red loam evidently charged with iron and fertilising salts, appears to suit the vine exactly, but is equally adapted for the growth of the orange and the olive, and almost every other description of fruit. But in addition to the favoured spots which a sufficient rainfall converts into a sort of earthly Paradise—but a Paradise where all the best places are bespoke, and new comers have to take a back seat—there are in the undulating plains which extend along the lower course of the River Murray hundreds of thousands of acres of the same fertile land which drought has parched into desert—a desert which only needs the fertilising touch of irrigation to “blossom like the rose.”

The capabilities of this district, which lies on either side of the boundary—the imaginary boundary of a parallel of latitude—between Victoria and South Australia, had not been altogether overlooked in the past. There were the plains, dismal from drought, and there was the river, often flooded, and with turbid flow,

rushing its millions of gallons daily, without profit, to the ocean, and the sad waste of it all was deplored by sundry sagacious observers. But it was the success of irrigation colonies in California which first drew effective attention to the subject. A member of the Colonial Government made a tour of observation among the American colonies, and, convinced that the conditions were even more favourable in Australia, entered into negotiations with a pair of successful colonisers after the Californian model; and from that followed a grant, confirmed by the Colonial Parliaments, of a large tract of land on which the experiment should be tried. With the land was necessarily granted the water privilege, for the one alone could make the other valuable, the grant being conditional on certain works being executed and capital expended from time to time.

The two brothers Chaffey—now a limited company—who undertook the risk of the experiment, commenced work without delay. Their experience in California, where they had started and developed one of the most successful fruit colonies in that favoured region, served them well in their new undertaking. A town plot was surveyed and laid out on the rectangular system, with shaded avenues and broad streets lined with shops, and sites of public buildings sketched in, with villa blocks for suburban residences, where, among gardens and lawns, the citizens of the future settlement might enjoy their happy hours of leisure. Encircling the city of the future was a network of horticultural blocks, each with its frontage to the highway or byway of the future, and each of the same area, that is ten acres, forming the unit of all cultural arrangements. But more important than highway or byway is the irrigational canal which is to run by its side, so planned that some branch or other of the main canal reaches every little plot at its highest point, so that the fructifying current may penetrate to every part.

The new settlement was happily named, or, perhaps, its native name was preserved as Mildura. The site was taken possession of in August, 1887; in appearance it was an exhausted sheep run, overrun with rabbits, who were barely able to make a living upon it. Four years after we have the result of the labours of entrepreneurs and colonists summarised in an official report to the Victorian Government. First, as to the irrigation, which is the fountain of all prosperity to the new colony. The enter-

prise began with pumping operations from a steamer moored in the river. There is now at work an engine of a thousand horsepower, established on a bend of the river, an engine which, by centrifugal pumps, can lift six hundred and fifty tons of water a minute. The water from the river is pumped into King's Billabong, a natural reservoir of overflow water. The word billabong indicates what we should call a backwater, such as abound on the friable banks of the River Murray, whose course is a series of "links," with folds and windings beyond even the customary vagaries of rivers among the plains. Besides the great centrifugal pump, other powerful pumps raise the water from one channel to another. At the date of the report there were already constructed one hundred and twenty-five miles of main channel and two hundred miles of subsidiary channels, while fifty miles of various channels were in course of survey and construction. In addition, a town supply has been inaugurated, and water from the river is conveyed by wrought-iron pipes to every part of the town for domestic use.

Of the land twenty thousand acres had been sold and cleared, and of these at least six thousand five hundred acres had been brought under cultivation, of which six thousand acres were devoted to vines or fruit-trees of various kinds. A town was springing up; numerous private dwellings had been built, not merely temporary erections, but substantial houses, in many cases of architectural merit. A post office had arisen, and also a custom house, the necessity for which latter structure excites vague astonishment in the English mind; till the astonishment is succeeded by regret to find that hostile tariffs rage among the Australian colonies, and that the River Murray forms the customs' frontier between Victoria and New South Wales, with custom officers, preventive services, smugglers, and all the burdensome train of such modes of taxation. Yet as a measure of prosperity it may be noted that while in 1888 the community paid only seventy-three pounds in customs' duties, during nine months of 1890 the duties levied reached the respectable figure of over three thousand pounds.

The settlement, too, lays itself out to provide for a fair amount of social intercourse and intellectual progress. There are good elementary schools, and an agricultural college is promised to follow; an "institute," which will include a library,

is in progress. The town itself is to be lighted by electricity. There existed at the date of the report sixty or more stores and places of business, and the usual facilities for spending money will no doubt arise in sufficient profusion, with one salutary exception. There are to be no public-houses, bars, saloons; the public sale of drink is interdicted, although there is no restriction on the private supply. But the most important point of all, the "nexus" of the whole social problem, is thus indicated in the report: "Outside the township area the horticultural blocks are everywhere dotted with comfortable settlers' homes, surrounded by their vineyard or orchard, from which the owners confidently expect to realise a competency."

The question whether this confident expectation is to be fulfilled is naturally an interesting one to us in England, where so many have relatives or friends, who are thinking about the matter, are going, or are definitely gone to, or who perhaps have actually arrived at, and written home from this interesting colony. For the scheme has been industriously and skilfully brought before the British public, and the British public has "caught on" to a considerable extent. Every class in society may be found among the settlers, and among the emigrants for the new colonies. There are peers and squires of degree, army and navy officers, professional men, tradesmen, farmers, gardeners; these and their sons, and often their daughters, are to be found at Mildura as settlers, many of them already busy on the land, others waiting for their plots of land to be stocked with fruit-trees, or for the trees to mature sufficiently to produce a paying crop. For those who desire work there is employment in the meantime in some one of the various industries called into existence by the successful opening of the colony. The company's engineering works are of considerable extent and employ a number of hands, and in the general work of clearing the land and bringing it into a state fit for cultivation there is an opening for unskilled labour. Yet one would be chary of advising a young man with only his industry as capital to venture there, for the settlers who have invested their money in the concern naturally enough have the call, and the number of these is continually increasing.

But at this point it may be as well to seek an interview with the chief commissioner for the company at his London

office. He is willing to suffer from the interviewer in the cause he represents. "The prospects of the colony," he says, "are most encouraging. Have you seen our raisins? Here is a small box of them, grown and sun-dried in our colony." The raisins certainly are convincing, for they would compare favourably with those raisins of Malaga, known for some reason or other as muscatels, and described in trade circulars as layers. They only want the fringed paper and the picture of the caballero in the tufted hat, or the signorina who is dancing the bolero, to complete the illusion. "And as for the other uses of the vine, there is a good prospect for those who cultivate the grape for wine-making, as the company intend to establish a wine factory, the brand of which may hereafter become celebrated. In oranges, too, the results have been very satisfactory. No, the 'Mildura' orange has not yet appeared in Covent Garden Market, nor will it do for some years—we shall have enough to do at first to supply our home market; but when it comes it will no doubt be appreciated, for our orange crop will be fit for gathering in March, and will reach this country in summer, when such fruit is most grateful to the palate, and when the European oranges of the previous season have practically disappeared. The olive, too, is a success, and before many years are over our olive oil will successfully compete with the Italian product. And we have lemons—here is half a lemon grown out there." It is a very nice-looking lemon indeed, thin-skinned, plump, and full of juice—just such a lemon as would have suggested punch in one's unregenerate days. The photographs of Mildura oranges, life size, suggest a noble and delicious fruit, such as some who have tasted it in its native habitat declare it to be in reality. What with photographs of pleasant dwellings raised among orange groves, and avenues of vines, surrounded by orchards and meadows; with the settlers themselves at work letting in the fertilising stream among the furrows prepared for its reception; and the general idea of fertility and exuberant vegetation afforded by the different scenes reproduced by the camera; a longing is excited to leave this land of chill and fog, and throw in one's lot with the orange groves and grape vines. Yes, it is almost the height of summer now at the antipodes, for over there the hay harvest is in November, and the corn

harvest in December, and the fruit harvest is now coming on. There is no dismal winter to follow, but instead a fresh and invigorating season, with the attributes which our poets rashly promise us, but which we so rarely find in an English May.

It must not be forgotten, however, that while the "boom" which has undoubtedly set in for the irrigation colonies is justified by hopeful prospects, the enterprise has not yet reached the stage at which success is beyond doubt for the settlers in general. Even with the best cultural results, there are the markets to be considered and the difficulties of establishing a new source of supply among mistrustful buyers. The capital, moreover, required by the settler is not insignificant. Your ten acre plot costs twenty pounds an acre for the fee simple—the amount may be paid on the five or ten years' system—and another thirty pounds an acre may be reckoned as the capital required to plant it, say, with orange-trees or grape-vines, and bring the whole into a condition for profitable bearing. There is the annual charge for water rights of six shillings an acre, which may be hereafter increased. For his protection, indeed, the settler acquires a share in the irrigation works for each acre purchased; and eventually the management, as also the charges of the whole irrigation supply, will rest with the colonists.

But if such considerations suggest caution in putting the "bottom dollar" into the fruit farm or risking the livelihood of a family on the venture, it is only fair to say that the scheme appears highly promising, and should be especially attractive to young men of an enterprising turn with a few hundred pounds at their back. Paterfamilias may provide a career for his sons without any great initial outlay, while for families of some means, but with numbers increasing out of proportion thereto, the new colonies seem to offer an opportunity for establishing its members in a useful, healthy pursuit, without the necessity of abandoning the social amenities of civilised life.

Doubtless, the future is with the fruit-grower. The increase in production seems to stimulate the demand, for there is an immense undeveloped capacity for eating fruit in average humanity. A handful of raisins will sustain exertion as well, or perhaps better, than a cup of beef tea. Our forefathers knew their value, and "raisins of the sun" were supplied to every sick-room. The Arab supports his fanatic ardour and

courage upon a bag of dates. The Italian peasant only asks for a sufficient supply of bread and his favourite olive. There is no reason to fear any permanent glut of fruit. All that Australia can raise will be, without doubt, gladly consumed in less favoured and more thickly populated lands.

The success of the present irrigation colonies would, no doubt, lead to the foundation of other colonies of the same description; but even the present scheme provides a very large area for cultivation. Hitherto, Mildura only has been mentioned; but there is a similar colony, several hundred miles lower down the River Murray, named Renmark, which is less advanced than the other; but, perhaps, on that account, affords a better prospect for new settlers. For all the land immediately around Mildura has been taken up, and new arrivals have to select lots, at a distance of perhaps four or five miles from the town. For the purposes of the two colonies, the Victorian Government, and that of South Australia, in which Renmark is situated, have allotted about half a million of acres to the Brothers Chaffey, of which it is calculated that four hundred thousand are adapted for horticultural purposes. So that, assuming that each ten acre plot supports not only its man, but its man's wife and, probably, a few of their children, and thus allotting five inhabitants to the block, the very respectable population of two hundred thousand souls might be anticipated for the two colonies.

And what a happy, sane, and vigorous existence is offered in the prospect, with every man dwelling literally under his own vine and fig-tree, for the fig flourishes equally well with the vine in the Australian climate; with labour sufficing but not arduous, with the faculties developed by a fascinating pursuit—for what can be more interesting than the harmless experiments in living tissue conducted by the fruit cultivator in the exercise of his daily avocations! Not every one, indeed, is adapted for the pursuit, which requires patience, watchfulness, keen powers of observation, and a kind of sympathy with nature, that studies the feelings even of a plant or shrub. There must be, too, unremitting vigilance. The curl of a leaf may denote the first appearance of some insect pest which, left to its natural increase, may spread ruin over a whole district; the drooping of a twig may denote the attack of a subterranean foe which must be coun-

termined on the instant, or swift destruction may follow. The phylloxera, the pest which for some time practically ruined the French vintage, made its appearance in Victoria, but was promptly stamped out owing to the vigilance of the cultivators, and the soil of the new colonies has been pronounced by competent judges as "phylloxera proof."

But the cares and anxieties of the fruit farmer are abundantly recompensed when he sees his crops ripening on the trees, when the air is filled with the sweetness of the orange blossom, and when golden clusters hang upon the bushy vine. For him and his are the charms of the vintage, the golden harvest of oranges, the trays of raisins which are spread in the glowing sunshine. What more comfortable reflection could such a one store up for old age than that he has helped to redeem a corner of the world from aridity and neglect, and made it such a garden of fertility and delight?

"A PENNY ALL THE WAY."

YES; that is without doubt one of the most familiar battle-cries of London of to-day. At any corner we may stand and hear it. "Ludgate Hill, Bank, Liverpool Street, a penny all the way. Here y'are, sir. Come along." And come along we do. And what distances we may travel for that same penny! From Victoria to Chancery Lane; from Charing Cross to Liverpool Street; from Piccadilly Circus to Kennington Church, the same coin will take us all the way; and all over London numerous other long runs at the same price.

We may well wonder what we should do without our humble, familiar "bus." We all use it, masses and classes alike, for business and pleasure; rich and poor are all to be found inside or outside. Do we want to shop, we take the omnibus; do we have mysterious business in the City; do we go calling—whatever we do, the omnibus is our chief means of locomotion. Then how much of the bustle and life of our streets is due to the rattle of the omnibuses! Stand at a big centre like Piccadilly Circus, and see what it is. There is from early morn to late night one continuous stream, north and south, east and west, never stopping all day, but always rolling on without a break. Some people dislike the noise, and say they would give anything for peace and quietness; but these

are the kind of people who ought to live in some quiet country town where everything is asleep. Why, the whole essence of London, to a real lover of London, is the continual bustle and rattle, and he would not for anything give up one little bit of it. Then, too, our omnibuses are to be thanked for the endless flow of small talk they provide to us poor English people, who are always hard up for that commodity. A good start can always be made by deploring the deficiencies of our line, or maybe praising its good points, which can break through the most stony reserve, and now, if we are that way inclined, we can grumble to each other to our hearts' content about the poor harmless tickets.

What an amount of vituperation they have come in for! Yet they are very harmless things, and it cannot hurt us much to have to take one and preserve it to our journey's end. In fact, some there may be found who will actually say that they like them, and so they too supply us with small talk. Then, did not the busmen treat us to a grand strike some time ago? What a fund of conversation was there not then! The hardship of going on our legs was quite lost in the usefulness of the strike as a promoter of small talk.

But enough of the uses of omnibuses; let us get on to our real subject. It may be assumed that everybody knows that of omnibuses there are several kinds. There are, firstly, those of the London General Omnibus Company; then those of the London Road Car Company; next come two or three smaller companies; then we have small proprietors, who run in agreement with the "General"; and lastly, there are the dreaded pirates, who seize upon helpless and ignorant wayfarers, whirl them away, and charge them twopence all the way instead of the orthodox penny. They fly no "Jolly Roger," no skull and cross-bones warn a too confiding public to beware; in fact, they would rather ape the appearance of a respectable trader. For the way they have no fears, it is only to the stranger that they are a dangerous trap.

Of the two big companies, the younger, the London Road Car Company, boasts that it has the largest stables. Perhaps as they came to the game when it was in full swing, they could gauge what was wanted, and could start on a big scale at once, while the General, having built up its business by degrees, took or built stables as required, and so in that way never made a great show. Be that as it may, the

Road Car has these stables, and well worth a visit they are.

The particular ones, which are the aforesaid biggest and which we are going to visit, are to be found in a street which turns from the main road a little past Walham Green Station. Perhaps a street is not the right term, its name being Farm Lane, which seems to take us back to times when our present suburbs were villages, and when, perhaps, this was a real country lane leading to a real farm. Well, it is all changed now; and as we go along the lane we become aware that it is spanned at the end by a large archway, which leads into a big, covered courtyard. Right through this we will pass, and make our way to a block of buildings on our left, for we are not yet going to inspect the stables, but first are going to have a look at another department of the Road Car Company.

An omnibus is an expensive article, and has to be well built. For years the General have built their own vehicles, and now the Road Car Company have followed their example; and to their works we will first give our attention. Having passed through the courtyard and turned to the left, we pass through a door and find ourselves in a passage with buildings on either side. These are the store-rooms and workshops, and though no work-people are to be seen, the constant sounds of hammers and saws, and the buzz of machinery tell us that plenty of work is being done, and that there is plenty to see. We will make our way to the office, find our guide, the manager of the works, and start, taking the different rooms as they come.

The first room we come to is the harness-room, where the work of harness-making goes on. Five sets of new harness are turned out every week, harness including traces and bridles and everything excepting collars, of which twenty-two are weekly turned out. Collar-making is a very curious industry, all the stuffing and shaping being done by hand, machinery not yet being available. The man seated on the floor, with the leather ready for the straw, and with his straw around him, rams the straw in with an iron pusher. Of course it all bulges out, and with a hammer he has to reduce it to its proper shape. All the collars made here are made to one pattern. In this room aprons are redressed; they are not made here, but bought ready made; and here the cushions are stuffed. All new cushions are being made with springs,

which cost a little more than ordinary stuffing, but which are doubtless very much more comfortable. Just off this room is the stock-room, where all this new harness is stored, collars and harness, stall collars, and traces; the latter hung up in sets of eight, which is the complement of every omnibus. A considerable amount of money is represented by this stock, for leather is not cheap, and only the best is used.

Passing out of this we find Store-room number one. This contains axles, which are all of one size and are interchangeable—which principle, indeed, obtains throughout the building of these cars—glass, cloth, and buttons. Store-room number two contains bolts, rubber, aprons, springs for cushions, spokes—which are procured ready shaped—different kinds of leather for traces, collars, and headstalls, which are not made of the same quality of material. Store-room number three is full of paint and varnish, and number four contains over one hundred tons of iron for tyres for wheels and such uses. In addition to these store-rooms there is a separate general store, to which articles are issued by the dozen or the gross, according to the size of the articles, from the various stores, and from which the different things are issued singly as required to the cars, each article being booked to the car to which it is issued. This same principle is carried out in all repairs to cars, so that at the end of every year the management can tell from a glance at the books what each car has cost them for that year, and through all preceding years, and can tell whether they are getting proper wear for their original outlay.

Next we come to the room where complete cars are standing ready for use, and fine they are in all their new paint and varnish, which must soon get dull under wear; but they somehow have an unfinished air about them, which, on reflection, we must perforce come to the conclusion arises from the fact that the advertisement boards round the top are wanting. As we are accustomed to see them, they somehow perhaps have come to be, in our minds, an integral part of an omnibus. But if these seem somehow wrong, what shall we say to the appearance of the next room? This is full of carcases of new cars, and of old cars undergoing repair. An omnibus devoid of its wheels and steps looks about the most helpless object going, and it is almost impossible to connect these dull

objects with the spick and span vehicles in the last room.

Here we discover that all omnibuses have to go through the yard once a year before the police stamp is placed upon them. This stamp is placed somewhere at the back of the vehicle, and contains the legend of the month and year in which it was imprinted. In addition to this the badge on the plate, which every public conveyance carries, is altered from year to year—one year a crown, the next a lion and the unicorn—so that the authorities are able to see at a glance if the vehicle has been out without overhauling beyond its proper time. Passing on, we come to the turning-room, where the buzz of machinery fills the air. Here are machines into which we may put a square piece of wood and see it come out round; mortice and boring machines which make the hole in the middle of the hub and cut the spokes the size to fit that hole; a machine to prepare the spokes for fitting into the felloes, which are the segments of circles of wood which go to make up the complete round. The spoke has to be cut to the right size, and not too great a length. This is all done by one machine, and all the spokes of one wheel are done in pretty well the same time as was required formerly, when the work was done by hand, for one spoke. To end up with they have planes, which we are airily told take about three thousand revolutions a minute. One hundred and twenty wheels a week can be turned out by this room. On the other side of the yard is the wood-yard, where a goodly stock of the various woods used is always kept.

Crossing over from the turning-room, we arrive at the ironwork machine-room. Here we have the usual machines for boring iron-work, and a curious little machine—it is quite small—for bending the tyres. These come in cut to length, straight and flat, and have to be bent to the right gauge. The machine is a low one, and the working parts are two small rollers; above these is a strong piece of iron, which can be raised and lowered at will to vary the bend. The tyre is taken and slightly bent on an anvil by a hammer and placed in the machine. The guide or upper piece of metal having previously been lowered to the required gauge, the tyre is started in, the bend already made allowing it to rest on the first roller, pass under the guide, and so reach the second roller, so that when the machine is started the rollers carry

it along perforce, while the guide gives it the required bend. Beyond this is the blacksmith's shop, with eight fires going.

Outside are the furnace and tank for shrinking the tyres on to the wheels. The apparatus consists of a furnace and a tank, with a rising and falling platform. The tyre is put into the furnace, heated red hot, put on the wheel, placed on the platform, and submerged in the tank. The cold, of course, contracts the metal, which is shrunk tight and fast on to the wheel. There is but one more room to visit, and that is upstairs above the rooms where the carcasses were. This is the paint-room, and to it the cars to be operated upon come by lift. Each car receives, before it is complete, no less than nineteen coats of paint and varnish, from the first dead lead colour coating to its final shining last coat of varnish. We suppose everything comes easy by practice; but it is wonderful how the picking out is done. With no guide, a straight line—as straight as possible—is drawn down the spoke of a wheel or elsewhere without the slightest apparent difficulty, and, as we are told, the workmen who can do this have not of necessity very steady hands—in fact, our guide tells us that he has seen a man with a hand trembling all over take his brush and do his picking out as straight as the best. The same with the lettering. Look at this man lettering a board, red on white. He does not even attempt to draw the letters first, but dashes off a few hieroglyphics and paints away with great unconcern, finishing properly at the end, with his letters matching as to size, and his spacing all correct. Three mills are constantly grinding away at the colours, and with the hard wear and tear an omnibus goes through, there cannot be much time lost for the painters.

This ends the first part of our journey, excepting the small room used as a recreation-room, for the workmen are encouraged in the formation of clubs, and on that score have nothing to complain of.

Having thus seen how they make public conveyances, the next thing we want to inspect is the stables and the horses, and to see how the latter are housed. To do this we will retrace our steps back into Farm Lane and enter the building afresh. But before we enter, we see a loose-box entered from the outside, having no communication at all with the inside, and this is kept as a sort of extra special sick bay. When any horse has anything doubtful the

matter with it—anything, that is, which may turn out to be infectious—that horse is isolated here, and the disease, if any, is prevented from having the chance of spreading to any other of the seven hundred horses which live here, for that is about the number for which room is found under this roof. Having inspected the inmate of the solitary confinement cell, who, we are told, has most probably only got a bad cold, let us make our way into the covered courtyard again, and this time pause and look around us. Half-way up the walls on either side are big doors which slide back and lead to the stables, and at either side towards the far end is a slope to the second storey. At this end is a flight of stairs leading to the foreman's house, and the passage between the slopes leads to the second foreman's abode.

At this end, to the left of the entrance, we find the ordinary sick bay, containing a few horses with colds, sore feet, and other slight ailments. The policy of taking good care of the animals, and stopping any ailment at once, being found the best, they are taken here on the slightest symptoms, and doctored up and fed on what they fancy, though how a horse makes known what his fancy is is difficult to understand. A veterinary surgeon makes a visit every day, there being two employed by the company. Leaving the sick bay, we enter the door on the left of the courtyard, and immediately find ourselves in the stables themselves, the two sides being thus employed. The farther end is utilised for another archway like the entrance. Here we have a double row of horses, and upstairs is the same, the way up being by the slopes before mentioned, only there the horses occupy almost all four sides. They have plenty of water, one trough to each two; and plenty of food, which is brought in every day. Thirty-two pounds of stuff they are each allowed, and stuff as good as you would demand for them. Take a handful up from this bin and look at it—good honest chopped hay, bran, and oats—everything a horse might wish for. It is brought in in bags each containing the day's allowance for three horses, which gives a goodly number of bags to be handled each day. The animals have for litter moss peat, which, though perhaps not so comfortable as straw, yet seems to answer very well. They have no fixed stalls, but moveable partitions form the divisions, which give them plenty of room to lie down. These

partitions are so contrived that if by any chance any restive beast should kick over them, they can be detached by one blow of the hand. Over each stall is the occupant's number, and the date of his purchase; one horse has been in the service of the company for almost twelve years—ever since, indeed, they started in business.

All this we note as we stroll around, having occasionally to get out of the way of horses returning from or going out to their work. They all seem to know their own particular quarters, and to go straight to them without any mistake. And this brings us to the working of the reliefs.

The horses are divided into studs of eleven each, each stud being under the charge of a horse-keeper, who has to keep the harness, groom the horses—and very well groomed they are as a rule before they go out—and take them out to the place where the cars change horses. This yard serves sixty cars, one stud to each car, on two lines. The outside row of stalls contain the studs for one, and the inside for the other. The studs are worked in rotation round the building, so that each horse-keeper, by keeping watch on the man before him, will know what he ought to be about as regards harnessing his charges. Thus when number six comes in with his pair just off the car, number eight, having began to harness when number six left with his relief, knows it is time for him to be off, and is ready. The horses do a little over three hours' work a day, the time of day at which their work is done being varied in due rotation.

As we go on listening to all this, we recognise the fact that the horses are all in patches of colour, and are told that the studs are kept as much as possible composed of horses of one colour, which gives to the long rows of animals a curious plebald effect. But there is not much to see further in long rows of quiet, strong horses, though a good many of them are good specimens and well worth a look, so we will leave this place of almost continuous work and go again into the courtyard. Here beyond the second archway we find a small farrier's shop—small in size, but not in work—and a few spare cars, ready to be taken out at a moment's notice, should anything go wrong with any now running. Retracing our steps, we find on the left of the entrance, as we leave, a harness repairing-room, where also the conductors come at night to pay in their

coin for the day through three little pay-boxes, and to receive tickets if necessary. It must be a busy scene late at night when this is taking place, everybody being in a greater hurry, or thinking he is, than everybody else, and nobody wanting to be the last.

Well, this is the end of our journey, and we must wend our steps back down Farm Lane, with the changes rattling by us, some driven, some ridden, according to the taste and fancy of the horse-keeper; but one thought we cannot keep out of our minds, and that is this. Remembering what awful things the omnibuses of the past were, and seeing what goodly things they are now, who can prophesy when improvements will end, or what gorgeous vehicles we may not find ourselves in in the future?

MEDIÆVAL MIRACLES.

IN connection with the history of miracles few points, as Archbishop Trench observes, present greater difficulties than the attempt to determine the exact period when the power of working them was withdrawn from the Church, and it entered into its permanent state, "with only its present miracles of grace and the record of its past miracles of power." Probably the retrocession was gradual. Chrysostom speaks of them as having ceased in his time, because the strength of faith, he says, no longer needed their assistance. Gregory the Great bears similar testimony. Yet, in the fourth century, when Ambrose refused to give up to the Arians the church which had recently been erected in his archiepiscopal city of Milan, he was supported in his refusal by a series of alleged phenomena. Two skeletons of extraordinary size were opportunely discovered, with the heads separated from their bodies, and a large quantity of fresh blood. These were deposited in the new church. Demoniacs brought within their reach showed signs of excessive perturbation; some of them revealed that the bones were those of martyrs, and proclaimed their names, Gervasius and Protasius; in other cases the demons cried out that all who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, as taught by Ambrose, would be tormented even as they themselves were. Miracles were wrought by the touch of the cloth which covered the

relics, and even by their shadow as they were borne along the streets. A butcher who had lost his sight recovered it on touching the hem of the pall, and was made sacristan of the church in which the relics were kept, that he might be a witness to their miraculous power. In discussing these incidents, Mr. Isaac Taylor and Mr. Henry Rogers roundly accuse Saint Ambrose of imposture. I prefer to think that he was the victim of self-deception. At the same time, it must be remembered that with nervous and hysterical patients some extraordinary cures are often effected in times of excitement, through the influence of the imagination on the nerve-centres; and not a few of the so-called mediæval miracles appear to have been of this description. I do not in these pages, however, intend to assume a controversial attitude, and, therefore, before I enter upon the historical part of my subject, shall content myself with adducing the principal objections taken by Protestant writers to the credibility of the wonderful narratives recorded by Catholic hagiographers and others.

The first is the difference in character between what I would call the Apostolic miracles and those reputed to have taken place in the later history of the Church. The latter are coarser, meaner, and lower in tone; and their performance seems almost always to have been attended with degrading and even repulsive circumstances. "*Les grands apologistes du Christianisme*," as M. de Pressensé says, "*ont conscience de cette infériorité*."

Second, unlike the Scripture miracles, they were wrought in useless profusion and without any adequate object; and instead of becoming less common as the Apostolic age receded, largely increased in number. They may be said, indeed, from their constant occurrence, to have lost their miraculous character.

Third, that whereas the earlier miracles were designed to strengthen, purify, and illuminate the faith of the Church, those of after-times supported manifest corruptions, superstitions, and the jealousies of individuals or communities.

Fourth, that the like stories occur among the Jews, the heathens, and the enthusiasts of our own time. The records of faith-healing, for instance, present numerous analogies to the miracles described by the hagiologists and monastic chroniclers. As much may be said of the phenomena of animal magnetism.

And, fifth, that "much must in reason be deducted from the stories on the ground of credulity, exaggeration, incompetence of witnesses, and even of loose principles of veracity, which we know to have been sanctioned, under the name of 'economy,' by the fathers of the age." As Dr. Mozley remarks: "Miraculous cures, vaticinations, visions, exorcisms, compose the current miracles of human history; but these are just the class which is most susceptible of exaggerating colour and interpretation, and most apt to owe its supernatural character to the imagination of the reporters."

In reference to the profusion of miraculous events, I may quote the case of Spinulus, a monk of Moyon-Moutier, in the Vosges, who died in 707. His death was followed by an epidemic of miracles, so that Hildulf, the abbot, fearing his monks might be beguiled from their proper work by the crowds of pilgrims who hastened to the wonderful scene, knelt down at the tomb of Spinulus, and charged the deceased monk, by the obedience which he had owed him while alive, to save the brotherhood from the impending danger. Spinulus complied, and the "*embarras des miracles*" was at an end.

The miracles reported most often and most complacently by the hagiographers and chroniclers are evident imitations of those in the Old and New Testaments. Such, for instance, as the water changed into wine, of which Matthew Paris speaks; the tumbling down of the walls of Angoulême at the approach of Clovis; and the sun standing still for eight-and-forty hours on the occasion of the massacre of Gaudri, Bishop of Laon. Not seldom they are reminiscences of some of the traditions of heathendom. Take, for instance, that of Saint Nicholas recalling to life the young children whose flesh had been served up at his table, as in the old world of myth and fable that of Pelops was served up to the gods; and the appearance of the Saviour in a beggar's disguise, demanding hospitality, as Jupiter sought that of Philemon and Baucis. Miracles were never wanting when some disputed point of doctrine had to be decided. It is well known that a prolonged controversy was maintained between the Churches of the East and the West on the proper date for celebrating the Easter festival. The Gallic Church chose the twenty-fifth of April; on which day, says Gregory of Tours, the fountains, which, by Divine ordinance, fill

themselves at Easter, were found to be brimming over.

Occasionally the heresiarchs were able to work miracles; but the power failed them if they attempted to exercise it in the presence of the incredulous. At the fifteenth session of the Council General, held at Constantinople, in 680, a priest named Polychronos, who maintained several heterodox opinions, offered to prove his orthodoxy by raising a dead man to life. A corpse was brought into the council hall; the priest made his confession upon it, and then spoke to it for several hours; but the deceased did not move. Thereupon the Council deposed Polychronos, and pronounced upon him anathema. But it is allowable to suppose that if the parts had been reversed, the fathers would have been as unsuccessful as he was in parodying the raising of Lazarus.

If an event occurred opportunely, the priests immediately shouted out, "A miracle!" During the expedition of Clovis against Alaric and his Goths, the army of the Franks found their march arrested at the Vienne by its inundation. In the night Clovis, on his knees, besought Heaven to reveal to him a ford by which he might lead his warriors across to the other bank. So on the morrow an immense dog entered the river, before all the army, and fording it safely, disclosed to the Franks a practicable passage. This occurrence is represented by Gregory of Tours as miraculous.

In the same manner an animal (species not recorded) showed a ford on the Iser—"Iser rolling rapidly"—to the army of Mummolus, Count of Autun, in his campaign against the Lombards.

It was long the custom, in all the wars of Christendom against Islam, and in religious wars generally, to connect some miraculous occurrence with the capture or deliverance of towns and fortresses. Even as late as the siege of Constance by the Imperialists, in 1632, the invention of the faithful was active in this direction. But it was during the erection of a church or monastery that miracles multiplied. Now an ox would come forward spontaneously to draw a loaded cart, and the work done, would mysteriously disappear. Now a felonious raven making free with the provisions of a monastic brotherhood would incur supernatural punishment. By the way, animals figure largely in the mediæval miracle-stories. A pet kid belonging to the monastery in which the remains of

Saint Edmund were enshrined chanced to injure its foot. By accident he lay down on the martyr's tomb, and immediately was made whole. Guibert de Nogent thus moralises on the event: "What, then, would not the beneficent martyr do for humanity—he who towards a beast showed so truly royal a compassion—if with faith we solicited his succour?"

Alas, not every saint showed himself so truly charitable as Saint Edmund! In a French author is found the following anecdote of Saint Rigobert, Bishop of Reims: "A little boy, who had been to school at the curé of the place, amused himself one day with jumping on the saint's tomb, to the dishonour of God and His servant. That the merits of Rigobert might be known to all, and to prevent the repetition of such an act of insolence, the child's foot was immediately stricken and he fell lame. Wherefore the curé caused a barrier to be raised all round the tomb lest any one should incur, through ignorance, the same punishment." As the little boy had erred from ignorance, it seems rather hard that he should have been chastised so severely.

The almost incredible puerility and nonsense to which the mediæval writers condescended when miracles became their theme may be impressed upon the reader by a few examples. They will help to explain the intellectual revolt of the Renaissance against the Church which encouraged, or at least promoted, the circulation of such imbecile credulity or calculated mendacity.

A Lombard deacon, named Vulfilaic, told Gregory of Tours that, once in his boyhood, he had accompanied his tutor, an Abbé named Aredius, to the Church of Saint Martin. "The latter," continued this veracious deacon, "having stolen a pinch of the blessed dust of this thrice-blessed sepulchre, put it in a small box and suspended it round my neck. On our return to his monastery, he took the box to place it in his oratory; but the dust was so augmented that it not only filled the box but escaped through the edges and at the lid. This miracle inflamed my soul with a living light, and decided me to rest all the hopes of my soul on the merits of this saint."

Another time we read of the sacred images and crucifixes moving head or eyes, changing colour, weeping, diffusing an agreeable odour, or emitting drops of blood. Stefani, a Neapolitan sculptor, carved a crucifix which is still extant in

the church of the Madonna at Naples. By the side of the image—the head of which hangs down on one side much more than is usual—is suspended an iron bullet; and the story runs that the crucifix, by an adroit sidelong movement of the head, escaped one day a shot fired from the camp of the Spaniards during their siege of the city.

A Spanish hagiologist, Manvil de Esperanca, writes: "Pedro de Olivani litigated certain privileges enjoyed by a convent of Franciscans. They admonished him not to be the enemy of the Mother of God. He replied that while he lived he would maintain his quarrel. He soon died, gnawing the tongue that had offended, and was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. After thirty-three years the grave was opened and the corpse found entire, for the earth had loathed to consume his proud and blasphemous body."

The death of a devout man was always attended with a miracle, as if death itself were not sufficiently miraculous! Sometimes celestial melodies penetrated into the death-chamber—the songs of beautiful spirits preparing to welcome home another purified soul. Sometimes an ineffable fragrance pervaded the air; sometimes the white wings of angels bore the soul away to its heavenly rest.

These picturesque and comparatively harmless fancies one could easily pardon; but what shall be said of a story so grotesquely profane as that which Baronius, I think, connects with the relics of Saint Martin? These relics, in a certain year, were exhibited all over France. At Auxerre the show took place in the church of Saint Germain, where numerous miracles immediately rejoiced the faithful. Thereupon the religious community of Auxerre demanded a moiety of the offerings made to Saint Martin, alleging that their saint was as expert a miracle-worker as the new arrival. The demand was refused on the ground that the recent wonders were due to Saint Martin alone. To settle the question, a leper was exposed midway between the two shrines. The side next to that of Saint Martin was healed; not so the other. That other side was then turned round, and lo, the happy leper found himself made whole! Not, says Baronius, that Saint Germain was inferior to Saint Martin, or incompetent to work as many miracles; but Saint Martin having honoured him with a visit, he was too polite to infringe upon the privileges of so distinguished a guest.

One more instance of saintly courtesy—Scene: Florence. Time: the fifteenth century. When the admirers of St. Bernardin were pleading for his canonisation, it was feared that the continual miracles performed at the tomb of a certain lay brother, Tommaso of Florence, would interfere with their success, and Giovanni Capistran, the Franciscan, ardently petitioned the latter to suspend operations. Tommaso obligingly consented, and would allow no more miracles to take place until after Bernardin's canonisation.

It has been shown that the oppressiveness of too many miracles was keenly felt by Abbot Hildulf; but there are numerous examples of the same kind on record. The tomb of Saint Etienne de Muret, canonised in 1088, in the Abbey of Grandmont, was so great an offender that the religious were completely worn out by the rush of votaries. The Prior devised, however, a very simple but effective remedy for this grievance. Betaking himself to the tomb, he spake as follows: "Servant of God, you preached to us the delights of solitude, and yet you assemble in our retreat as many people as if it were a market or a fair. We are sufficiently persuaded of your sanctity not to be curious about your miracles. If then you will not leave off working them, we protest and declare on high, in virtue of the obedience we have promised you, that we will unearth your bones and throw them into the river." As might be expected, the threat was sufficient, and Saint Etienne de Muret did no more miracles.

That the saints were as amenable to menaces as to prayers we know from several records; but one example will suffice. A great conflagration having broken out in Rome, about 993, which, it was feared, would involve in ruin the cathedral of Saint Peter, the people stood in despair watching the progress of the flames. At length, with a terrible cry, they hastened to throw themselves at the foot of the Apostle's image, declaring, with sighs and tears, that if he would not provide for the safety of his church, thousands of his servants, all over the world, would abandon the faith he had taught them.

The story of the self-deception of that noble woman, Catharine of Sienna, is pathetically interesting. She had suffered severely from exhaustion consequent upon excessive mental labour and physical effort.

As soon as she could crawl to the chapel attached to her residence, she resumed her habit of daily prayer and meditation. On one occasion, as she had been absent longer than usual, her friends went in search of her, and found her prostrate on the ground, with eyes closed, and unconscious of all that passed around her. Silent, they waited and watched, until the hush of evening gathered round the holy altar, and the shadows deepened in the nave and choir. All at once, to their surprise and awe, she raised herself on her knees, stretched forth her arms until her attitude was like to the figure of a cross. Her countenance was all aflame; her fixed eyes seemed to rest on some object invisible; a strange smile hovered about her lips; still and rigid, she remained in this posture for several minutes; then suddenly fell to the ground as if she had received a death-wound in heart or brain. Her friends tenderly conveyed her home, and by her side, when she awoke to a sense of the outer world, sat her friend and confessor, Raymond of Capua. "Father," she whispered to him, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Afterwards she spoke more fully: "I saw my Lord extended on His cross; from each of His five wounds streamed towards me a ray of heavenly light. My love for Him, and my soul's yearning to leap out of the body towards Him, were so strong, that they raised me from the ground on which I was prostrated, and supported me while I gazed. The five bright rays pierced my hands, my feet, and my side with a pain so sharp that I fell as if dead. Then I besought the Lord that His blessed wounds might not appear visibly in my body, so that none but myself may know my secret suffering."

Upon this delusion little comment need be made. It should not affect an estimate of Catharine's character, for it is certain that she was herself deceived; that it was no subtle invention, designed to impose on the minds of men, and enhance her fame as a favoured instrument of Providence, but the half delirious fancy of a heated imagination, acted upon by certain physical conditions.

Roman Catholic writers sometimes enlarge upon the miraculous power of Bernard of Clairvaux, the famous founder of the Cistercians; and there is no doubt that he himself believed them to be real. But enthusiasts too frequently fall a victim to delusions of this kind, and, moreover, are easily made the victims of imposture. It is

certain that in his own time they were discredited by Abelard, Berenger, Walter Map, and other men of cool and impartial judgement; and there seems no more reason why this gift should have been conferred upon Bernard than upon any other man devoted to the service of his Master. Among the miracles attributed to him I take the following: A Knight who, for eighteen months, had been the victim of an attack of quartan fever, he cured immediately with a piece of consecrated bread. A young man had received a mortal wound in the head. As he lay, foaming and unconscious, a small mouthful of bread, blessed "by the man of God," was placed between his lips, and within that very hour he was healed. The mother of Walter of Montmirail received Bernard as a guest, and presented her child, then a babe of three months, to receive his blessing. As the "man of God" spoke, he now and then stretched forth his hand, and the infant endeavoured to seize it. When it had made several attempts, its action was at length observed, and it was allowed to have its way. With the deepest reverence it seized the saint's hand with its tiny palms, lifted it to its mouth, and kissed it repeatedly.

Even in the smallest matters the influence of his sanctity made itself felt. When he dedicated a church at Joigny, it happened that the place was infested with flies, so that their buzzing and incessant swarming hither and thither was an intolerable nuisance to all present. As no remedy could be devised, Bernard said: "I excommunicate them," and in the morning all were found dead. On another occasion, when he and his companions were journeying from Chalons, they were much embarrassed by a storm of wind and rain, and in the darkness got separated from one another, so that at last he was left with two attendants only. They had dismounted to take a little rest, when the horse of one of them stole away and was soon seen galloping across the open plain. Their efforts to catch him proved fruitless. "Let us pray," said Bernard; and while they were repeating the Lord's Prayer the horse quietly returned, stood still before Bernard, and allowed the saint to restore him to his rider.

Augustine, the monk sent by Pope Gregory the Great, to establish Latin Christianity in England, in 596, was so inflated by his success as to claim the possession of miraculous powers. Gregory

was by no means satisfied with his legate's pretensions, and in a letter, still extant—published by Thierry—delicately rebukes his spiritual pride, though he does not venture to repudiate the miracles. "I am rejoiced to hear of the great marvels which our Lord has seen fit to perform by your agency in the eyes of the nation which He has chosen, because external prodigies effectively incline the souls of men to seek internal grace; but do you, on your own part, be careful that in the midst of these wonders your mind be not swollen up and rendered presumptuous. Be careful that that which raises you outwardly in consideration and honour does not become an inward cause of downfall through the allurements of vainglory."

During the excitement which the first Crusade awoke throughout all Christendom, miracles were of almost hourly occurrence, the fevered imagination of the ignorant and credulous detecting a marvellous element in things of common occurrence. A swarm of butterflies or a flight of birds was immediately put down as on the road to Jerusalem, an assertion which it was equally difficult to prove or deny. Clouds gathering on the horizon under certain atmospheric conditions were converted into armies of Christian warriors contending with the Paynim, or else were assumed to represent the Cross of Calvary. The ordinary miracle was multiplied immensely; and so many dumb persons spoke, so many lame recovered the use of their limbs, so many blind were restored to sight, that such miraculous cures became mere commonplaces. This multiplication of miracles induced, however, a sceptical frame of mind among many observers, and even so credulous a chronicler as Guibert de Nogent cannot refrain from satirical criticism when he comes to speak of the widespread delusion. His lively remarks are well worth quoting:

"When the news of the Crusade," he says, "circulated among Christian nations, men of the obscurest condition, and women even the least worthy, resorted to all kinds of devices in order to make believe that God had impressed on their body a miraculous cross. One would draw a little blood from his veins, trace with it some lines in the form of a cross, and then display them before all eyes. Another would take the juice of fresh fruit and use it for the same purpose; and as it was their custom to paint the face just under the eyelids, so they painted themselves

with gum or red, that they might, by means of this fraud, present themselves as living witnesses of the miracles of Heaven. There was an abbé, who afterwards became Bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine; with a knife he made an incision in his forehead. I declare before Heaven that, residing in those times at Beauvais, I saw on one occasion, at midday, some clouds massed one upon another in a slightly oblique direction, and in such wise that one might perhaps have been able to trace in them a likeness to a crane or a stork, when suddenly thousands of voices rose on every side, proclaiming that a cross had just appeared in the skies. What I am about to relate," continues Guibert, "is very absurd, and yet the fact is established by incontrovertible evidence. A woman had undertaken the journey to Jerusalem. Brought up in I know not what school, and acting in a way scarcely in harmony with its usual character for stupidity, a goose, with careful step, marched by her side. Immediately a report spread rapidly abroad, in every castle and town, that the goose had been commissioned by Heaven to the conquest of Jerusalem; nor would men allow even to this unfortunate female that it was she who conducted her goose; on the contrary, they persisted that the goose conducted her. At Cambrai, the people divided on one side and the other to allow this woman to make her way up to the altar, and the goose duly followed her without any person directing it. Soon afterwards, as I have heard, this goose died at Lorraine. It would have had a much better chance of reaching Jerusalem if, on the eve of its mistress's departure, it had given itself up to her to furnish a festal repast. I have related these particulars," says Guibert, in conclusion, "in a history intended to establish the truth, to the end that we may take care not to lower the dignity of the name of Christian by lightly adopting the fables of the populace."

If we take a rapid glance at some of the saints whose names are still perpetuated in the Roman Calendar, we shall be astonished, not so much at their miraculous powers, as at the trivial occasions on which they thought fit to exercise them. Thus it is said of an Irish saint named Moohan that, one day, while walking and praying, he perceived a number of lambs hastening to rejoin their mothers, and immediately drew a line upon the ground which none of them were able to pass. The

"Aurea Legenda" relates of Saint Macarius, that he took a dead pagan out of his grave, and used him as a pillow; that certain devils then came to terrify the saint, and called upon the dead pagan to accompany them! He replied that he was unable, because a pilgrim lay upon him so that he could not move; then Macarius, nothing afraid, pummelled him lustily with his fists, and bade him go if he would; at which the devils declared that Macarius had conquered them.

Of Elfego or Alfego, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was martyred by the Danes in 1012, it is said, that after his death an old rotten stake was driven into his body; and those who drove it said, that if on the morrow it was green and bore leaves, they would accept the religion of the Cross. Whereupon the stake shot up into a young tree, and the persecutors repented as they had promised, and the saint's body was removed to St. Paul's, in London, where it wrought a long succession of miracles.

Space would fail me to relate the wonders connected with the martyrdom of Saint Alban, "the Proto-martyr of England." As everybody knows, he was a citizen of Verulamium, who, in the reign of Diocletian, was doomed to death for having shown hospitality to Amphibalus, a Christian priest, and refusal to sacrifice to idols. Without delay he was conducted towards the place of execution—a wooded eminence, now named Holmhurst, on the farther side of the river Ver; but when the procession reached the bank, it was found that the narrow bridge was blocked by the crowds who were hurrying to witness the spectacle. Alban, yearning after the martyr's crown, prayed that a way might be opened up before him; and immediately the waters parted, and he and his guards passed over dry-footed. On arriving at the hilltop he felt athirst; and lo, a spring suddenly gushed forth at his feet! These miraculous occurrences so affected the executioner that he refused to perform his office upon a man so evidently favoured by Heaven; but the Roman magistrates and soldiers were hard of heart, and condemned him to suffer also. Here "we must bemoan," as Fuller says, "that we want the true story of this man's martyrdom, which impudent monks have mixed with so many improbable tales, that it is a torture to a discreet ear to hear them."

Our English saints seem not to have been inferior in supernatural gifts to any

of their European or Asiatic compeers. Of Saint John of Beverley more wonderful stories are told by Bede than I care to repeat; and William of Malmesbury relates that the Burnley townsmen were constrained to acknowledge his sanctity when they saw that the fiercest bulls, on being haled into his churchyard, instantly became mild as lambs. It is said that King Athelstan laid his knife on the saint's altar as a pledge that if, through his interposition, he triumphed over the Scots, he would enrich his church. Having gained a great victory, he desired a sign of perpetual superiority or war-lordship over Scotland, and struck his sword into a rock near Dunbar Castle, which for ages retained a great dent of a yard in length from the "swashing blue." It is also said that, in 1312, a wonderful oil issued from the saint's sepulchre, and proved an effectual cure, like a patent medicine, for all kinds of diseases.

Then there is Saint Swithin of Winchester. After he had built the bridge in his episcopal city, a woman crossed it with her apron full of eggs; but a rude fellow, jostling against her, broke them. The woman was bemoaning her loss when the saint passed by, who, lifting up his hands, blessed the eggs, so that they were made "hole and sounde."

Saint Swithin, by his express request, was buried in the open churchyard, "thinking no vault was so good to cover his grave as that of heaven." When he was canonised, however, the monks of Winchester took it into their heads that his body ought to have a more dignified resting-place, and resolved to remove it into the choir, fixing the fifteenth of July for its solemn translation. It rained, however, so violently on that day and for forty days in succession, that they abandoned their design as contrary to the Divine will, and instead, erected a chapel over his grave, at which many miracles are said to have been wrought.

Saint Blasé was not of English birth, but his name, oddly enough, is retained in our Church of England calendar. The Jesuit, Ribadeneira, relates some episodes in his life which should satisfy the keenest appetite for the marvellous. He lived in a cave, where he was visited by wild beasts in need of medical and surgical assistance. If he happened to be at his devotions they never interrupted him, but waited until he had ended. On one occasion he cured a youth, who had a fish-bone stuck in his throat, by praying; and Ribadeneira asserts

that Ælius, an ancient Greek physician, gave as a formula for a stoppage in the throat the following: "Hold the sufferer by the throat and pronounce these words — 'Blasé, the martyr and servant of Jesus Christ, commands thee to pass up or down.'" The saint was cruelly scourged by the enemies of the Christian faith. Seven holy women anointed themselves with the blood that trickled from his wounds; whereupon their flesh was torn with iron combs; nothing but milk, however, flowed; their flesh became whiter than snow; angels descended and healed the wounds as fast as they were made. They were put into the fire, which refused to consume them; they were then ordered to be beheaded, and miraculous interposition went no farther. Saint Blasé was sentenced to be drowned "in the lake"; but drowned he did not choose to be. He walked on the water, sat down on it in the middle, and invited his persecutors to follow his example. Three score and eight tried the experiment, and were drowned; whereupon Saint Blasé walked back to the shore to be beheaded.

In the "Aurea Legenda" we read that a wolf having run away with a woman's pig, she prayed to Saint Blasé that she might have her own again. Saint Blasé, with a smile, promised that she should, and accordingly the wolf returned with the pig, which the woman immediately slaughtered, offering the head and the feet, with some bread and a candle, to Saint Blasé. "And he thanked God and ate thereof; and he seyed to her, that every year she sholde offer in his chirche a candell. And she dyd all her lyf, and she had moche great prosperyte. And know thou that to thee, and to all them that so shalt do, shall well happen to them."

One of the prettiest of these legends is that of Saint Christopher, and it seems to have been very popular, to judge from the number of churches in England in which it is depicted in fresco on the sacred walls. Visitors to the Isle of Wight may recollect a very good example in the church at Shorwell. Saint Christopher, it is said, lived on the bank of a stream, and being a man of great strength, obtained a livelihood by carrying people across to the other side. One evening a child asked to be carried over. At first his weight corresponded with his infant years, but it began quickly to increase, and to such an extent that the big ferryman was like to sink under it. Then said the child,

"Wonder not, my friend, for I am Jesus, and you carry the weight of the sins of the whole world on your back!"

In due time Saint Christopher came to be taken as a symbol of the Christian Church. The legend is not without a moral if the Christian reader choose to look for it.

Erasmus, in one of his colloquies, representing a company in danger of shipwreck, says: "Did no one think of Christopher? I heard one, and could not help smiling, who with a shout, lest the saint should fail to hear him, promised to the Christopher who dwells in the great church at Paris (alluding to a gigantic wooden image of the saint in Notre Dame), and is a mountain rather than a statue, a wax figure as big as himself. He had repeated his vow more than once, halloaing his loudest, when the man who sat next to him touched him with his finger and said, 'You could not pay that, even if you sold all your goods and chattels.' Then the other, in a low voice, that Christopher might not overhear him, whispered, 'Hush, you fool! Do you think I am in earnest? If I once reach the shore in safety I shan't give him a tallow candle!'"

My last sample of the miracle stories which were so dear to the mediæval mind shall be taken from the life of Saint Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, whose name is retained in our Church of England Calendar. He was the patron or titular saint of virgins, boys, and the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks of the City of London.

In his very earliest years — that is, when a babe at his mother's breast—he showed himself a strict observer of Catholic rites, always fasting on Wednesday and Friday.

The best known of his miracles is the following, which seems to have been partly suggested by an old classic myth. An "Asiatic gentleman" sent his two sons to Athens to be educated, and ordered them, as they passed through Myra, to wait on the Bishop and obtain his blessing. On arriving at Myra they took up their lodging at an inn, purposing, as it was late in the day, to postpone their visit till the morrow; but in the night the wicked innkeeper, to secure their valuables, murdered them, and cut them into pieces, which he salted, intending to sell them for pickled pork. Happily, Saint Nicholas in a vision witnessed his iniquitous deed, and in the morning, hastening to the inn, he

reproached the murderer with his crime. He at once confessed what he was unable to deny, and implored the Bishop to pray to Heaven for his pardon. Moved by his penitence, the Bishop knelt in prayer, and supplicated forgiveness for him and restoration of life to the children. His prayer was granted; the pickled pieces of pork reunited, and the resuscitated youths stepped out of the brine-tub to throw themselves at the feet of the Bishop, who, however, exhorted them to return thanks to God alone. Then he gave them his blessing, and sent them on their way rejoicing.

Stories such as these which I have collected abound in the pages of Bede, the monastic chroniclers of England and France, in Ribadensira, and the "Legenda Aurea," and formed the chief reading of the mediæval populace. Surely it is a great gain for the best interests of humanity that a wholesomer and saner literature is now at the disposal of the "masses," and that these extravagant, grotesque, and too frequently profane fictions are, even among Roman Catholics, subjected to an active and even sceptical criticism. It is surprising how small a number are distinguished by any poetical or picturesque touch, or adapted to enforce any valuable moral lesson. The majority of them are, from every point of view, quite worthless.

THE END OF HIS WORK.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

BY LUCIE WALKER.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Kermesse at Neckarsteinach was in full swing when Mark Anstruther got out of the five o'clock train, and worked his way through the sight-seers and pleasure-seekers who filled the streets leading to the little market-place in front of the church. Here the crowd was considerably denser and the noise vastly louder. There were strident voices and still more strident instruments of music, making a babel of laughter, shouting, and popular melodies. From a shooting gallery came the crack of pistols, half-a-dozen showmen were using all the blandishments of their profession to entice an audience into their respective gaily painted booths; there were spangled

actors and actresses performing in front of a theatre; there was a roundabout, driven by a noisy engine; there were vendors of gingerbread, of pancakes, of fried potatoes; there were lotteries, peep-shows, and Aunt Sallies, and above and through all there was a July sun and July dust, which seemed to make the noise more vociferous, the discords more harsh, and the confusion more confounded. Mark needed all his patience as he elbowed his way hither and thither without coming on a trace of his friends.

"It was very rash of me," he said, at last, as the church clock rang out six. "This is mere waste of time. We ought to have had a proper rendezvous."

Another ten minutes' struggle brought him to a quieter corner, where he paused and looked round. There they were, right across the market-place. He easily distinguished Kosinski's tall figure and Audrey's golden hair. They were standing still, evidently engaged with something or some one.

"Here I am!" he cried, joyfully, as he reached them finally; "I had almost given myself and you up."

But his words fell unheeded. Audrey was standing looking a little embarrassed before a fantastically dressed gipsy woman, who seemed to be pouring out a flood of prophecies. Kosinski was beside her, an amused expression on his handsome face.

It was Lady Conyers who was first aware that Mark had arrived.

"Ah, Mark!" she cried, "I'm glad to see you. Do come and put an end to this nonsense. Audrey ought to be ashamed of herself, and so ought Mr. Kosinski for encouraging her to listen to this chattering impostor."

Audrey looked up with a start. "Why, Mark," she said, "I had no idea your train was in. Is it so late already? And please don't be horrified at my having my fortune told. I thought it would be such fun; but the little I can understand seems quite dreary and mournful."

"That," said Kosinski, "is because you only gave her fifty pfennigs, when she hoped for a mark. She won't make her best promises too cheap. Now you see." Then turning to the gipsy, he held out his hand. "Tell me what's in store for me, my pretty girl," he said, "and here is a thaler for you, so make it sweet."

"Oh, Mr. Kosinski," began Lady Conyers, "you surely——"

"Oh, that's his way," said Mark, laugh-

ing; "he does it just for the fun of the thing."

Lady Conyers shook her head.

The gipsy looked for a long time at Kosinski's palm.

"Come," he said at last, impatiently, "if you can't fib quicker than that you are not fit for your trade."

"I'm not going to fib," said the gipsy, loosening his hand; "nor am I going to tell you the truth which I read here. It will tell itself before long, and no one will be the happier for it. Here is your thaler back."

"Oh, bother the money," he cried. "Keep it now you've got it; but we wouldn't have troubled you if we had known you were of the tragic sort. Now," he went on, turning to the others, "isn't it time to be getting to the inn? We want to see the beginning of the ball, you know."

It was practically impossible for them all to keep together in the crush. Before they had gone many yards they were in couples, and Mark's companion was Lady Conyers. The other two had turned aside to look at a stall.

"Oh, dear," said Lady Conyers, "what is Audrey doing? I thought we were on our way to the inn."

"So we are," said Mark, who was struggling with the sense of not being very well treated. "You and I don't want to look at any more gingerbread mannikins. We will not wait; they will follow us soon."

"Nonsense, my dear Mark," rejoined Lady Conyers, irritably; "you didn't come here to tug me through the crowd, but to be with Audrey. I can't think why you leave her so much to that student friend of yours. Go to her now and take possession of her, you silly fellow; can't you see you are cutting out trouble for yourself?"

"Lady Conyers!" cried Mark, "what do you mean? Please remember that I have every faith in Audrey, and as to Kosinski, you don't know him if you take him for—that sort of man."

"I don't know what sort of man 'that sort' is," went on the old lady, hotly; "but he's the sort I call an outrageous flirt; and your faith in Audrey is, of course, very right and proper, but it needn't amount to blindness. Now don't think," she continued, as he looked at her in dismay, "that I am saying this merely because I am tired and cross. That, no doubt, helped it out; but it's been on my

mind this week and more, and I have been giving you hints of which you have taken no heed. I know where the inn is, and I don't want your escort. Of course it isn't pleasant being jostled by hot bumpkins; however, since I allowed myself to be dragged here, I must take the consequences. Still, I needn't allow Audrey to behave badly. Now, go this moment, and remember you are to dance with her yourself this evening; let the student find a partner for himself if he wants one."

Mark tried to smile at her vexation as he turned to obey her; but he did not quite succeed. Moreover, he could not deny that there was a certain air of possession in the way Kosinski was protecting Audrey from the stream of people. They were talking together, and did not see him till he laid his hand on her arm.

"Mark!" she cried, "surely you haven't lost Aunt Sophy. I thought she was with you."

"She was with me," replied Mark, feeling rather shamefaced; "but she sent me to you to—say she was going to the inn."

"So are we," said Audrey, in a reproachful tone, "and she isn't fit to go alone through this throng."

"She insisted," said Mark, thinking how annoyed Lady Conyers would have been to hear him on the defence.

"She thought I couldn't be trusted, I expect," said Kosinski, airily. "My dear Miss Wilmot, I don't doubt that your aunt is a person of great discrimination, yet she quite overlooks my extraordinary merits. Suppose we disappear for an hour, merely to justify her suspicions of me. As it is your last day, it would not bring me any loss of your company in future."

"Don't talk nonsense, Kosinski," said Mark; "but let us make haste to do what Lady Conyers wishes."

Kosinski looked at Mark and raised his eyebrows, then they walked in silence to the inn.

At supper, which Kosinski had ordered according to the due rites and formulae of a country kermesse, no one was very gay. Lady Conyers was distinctly out of humour, she confessed to being tired, and thought such scenes of amusement were better left to the lower classes.

"I'm not particular what class I amuse myself with," said Kosinski, "so long as I am amused, which I have been vastly this afternoon. I hope, Miss Wilmot, you have not also come to the conclusion that our expedition has been a mistake."

"Oh dear no," said Audrey; "I think it has all been very interesting."

Mark's manner was grave and subdued. He too pleaded heat and fatigue.

"Then I'm afraid you will not want to do any dancing," said Audrey; "however, you'll let me have just one dance, won't you? I shall so enjoy telling this adventure to them all when I go back."

"Of course Mark will dance one dance," said Lady Conyers, rather sharply, "and then we must come away; I do not want to be late."

"Nor do I," interposed Kosinski, coolly; "but I am sure you will allow Miss Wilmot to keep the promise she has given me for the first dance. I assure you I shall take the greatest care of her."

Mark glanced from one to the other. He certainly looked pale and tired.

"I have not the least doubt of that, Kosinski," he said; "and as she, no doubt, promised you a dance before I thought of asking for one, I will defer my claim to yours. Now, come and let's have a smoke outside."

He rose, and laying his hand affectionately on Kosinski's arm, drew him out of the room.

Audrey looked after them.

"Aunt Sophy," she said, as they disappeared, "why are you so cross with Mr. Kosinski? It makes us all so uncomfortable."

"I'm not sorry if it does," rejoined Aunt Sophy, testily; "you all thoroughly deserve it, especially Mark; but I'll say no more. Young men are not what they were when I was engaged to your dear uncle."

Half an hour later a noisy orchestra had taken its place in a wooden gallery at the end of a long, roofed-in shed behind the inn, and was storming away at a polonaise as a summons to those who meant to crown the festivities by fresh exertions. Kosinski and Mark returned to the ladies.

"Now, Miss Wilmot," began the former, offering her his arm, "may I have the great honour?"

"He means," interposed Mark, laughing, "will you accept the honour? For let me tell you he is renowned as a partner. I believe girls squabble for him. You're lucky to have him instead of me."

But as Audrey took the proffered arm, and allowed Kosinski to lead her from the room, the smile died from Mark's lips and he slowly followed them across the courtyard,

and leaning against one of the pillars which supported the roof of the primitive ball-room, he stood watching, his face growing paler, sadder, and more determined.

The long line of the polonaise advanced and retreated, spread itself out and narrowed again, wound and unwound itself in all the tortuous mazes which the leaders could devise; but Mark never lost sight of one couple in the mass of dancers, and when the music changed, when the strains of a Strauss waltz crashed and screamed from blatant cornet and rasping fiddle, when the long line broke up into whirling couples, he watched them still. They passed him once, twice, but they did not see him; at last they paused so near to him that he might have overheard what they said. Then he drew back into the fast-gathering twilight.

"Yes," he said to himself, as the last chords of the music crashed out; "yes; why shouldn't I do it? Some one will have to have a heartache, and I think mine will be the easiest to bear."

CHAPTER V.

It was the evening of the day on which Lady Conyers and Audrey Wilmot had left Heidelberg. Mark Anstruther was pacing up and down his little room, letting the pipe he was trying to smoke go out every few minutes, and pausing now and again in front of his window to look along the road.

"Here you are at last," he cried, as the door opened, and Kosinski, spruce and gay as usual, entered. "I thought you weren't coming."

"Nor was I, old boy, till I got your note by chance a few minutes ago. Now, what's the particular word you want to say to me? By Jove! how down in the dumps you look! If the fair Audrey could only see the sequel to her departure!"

"I am in the dumps," rejoined Mark, "but it is not altogether from the cause you think. The fact is——"

"Ah, yes," said the other, jumping with his usual readiness to a conclusion, "you'll see her again so soon that it isn't worth while——"

"Alexis," interrupted Mark in his turn, "that is just what I want to tell you. I shall probably never see Audrey Wilmot again. I have written to her and released her from her engagement. She will find

the letter at Bellaggio when she arrives the day after to-morrow."

"Gott in Himmel, Anstruther, what have you done that for?"

"I should think you can guess," replied Mark, a passionate tremor underlying his forced calm. "I saw how things stood between you and her yesterday evening. I suppose I might have seen it sooner. How could I insist on our engagement after that?"

"You are perfectly mad," said Kosinski, coolly, "or you would never have committed such a piece of absurd folly."

"Kosinski," cried Mark, pathetically, "there is no folly in what I have done. I know her ways so well. I have made no mistake about her feelings towards you. It seems to me now that there is but one way out of it."

"And that?" said Kosinski, as his friend paused.

"That," said Mark, as steadily as he could, "is for you to claim the love you have won from her—and from me."

Kosinski laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh.

"Many thanks, my dear Anstruther," he said, "that is a truly magnanimous proposal of yours; unfortunately, I cannot accept it. By the way, have you told Miss Wilmot your reason for offering to release her?"

"Of course I have," said Mark, simply.

Kosinski rose from the chair in which he was sitting.

"Well, your folly is even greater than I supposed. Do you know that when you plan this sort of arrangement you must consult both parties? Assuming that Miss Wilmot does me the honour you impute to me, I am not at liberty to step into the place you have vacated and prepared for me. Do you know that I am as much engaged as you are? nay, more, for I have no wish to break my engagement. Do you remember my comparing you to a man whom I called Hannibal at the matrimonial altar? Well, that man is myself. I have been engaged to the Princess Olga Bortschakoff for a dozen years, and I don't mean to marry until I'm really obliged to. As to making love to Miss Wilmot," he shrugged his shoulders, "I had no more notion of it than a babe unborn. Now you take my advice and telegraph to her at Bellaggio to leave your letter unopened."

"Keep your advice to yourself," cried Mark, hotly, rising and facing him; "and

let me tell you that you are a scoundrel; if you don't know why, I am sorry for you. If you don't care for her, you've made her think you do. You are a despicable scoundrel."

"I tell you what," replied Kosinski, still in the same unmoved tone, "if you weren't half out of your senses I'd fight you."

"No, you wouldn't; I wouldn't fight you. I'll horsewhip you, though, and in public, too, if ever I meet you about Heidelberg again."

"Anstruther," said the other, "don't rave. No one ever frightens me by bravado. Good night. Think it over, and send the telegram."

"There," cried Mark, "that's enough. Now go, and reap what you've sown, if there's any justice in fate."

"So that's what comes," said Kosinski to himself, as he walked home along the Anlage, "of getting mixed up with a lot of English folk."

It was more than a fortnight before Lady Conyers and Audrey reached the Italian lakes. A feverish attack, which she entirely laid to the charge of the heat and fatigue of the Kermesse, kept the elder lady a prisoner at Bâle. They wrote to inform Mark of their delay, but without getting any word in return.

"I expect he is too busy to write," said Audrey, when her aunt referred to this unusual silence; inwardly she had a misgiving that the silence was the sequel to the strange, constrained parting which had passed between her and Mark. Did he, as well as Aunt Sophy, think she had flirted with Mr. Kosinski? She had not meant to flirt, yet, somehow, when she had been with Mark's friend her engagement had seemed dull and tame, and she knew she had drawn comparisons which had mostly been to Mark's disadvantage. She had once or twice thought it probable that she would care a great deal for Alexis Kosinski if she had been really free, and she was half conscious of having wished for her freedom. Her mind went round and round these thoughts, as the train bore them, towards the end of July, to Bellaggio. "A letter from Mark at last, Aunt Sophy," she cried, after due enquiries on their arrival, "and the postmark is a fortnight old."

"Dear, dear," said Lady Conyers, taking up her own accumulation of correspondence. "Well, now, prepare for a scolding, for I'm sure it contains one."

"Oh," laughed Audrey, "I'm not much afraid. Mark is never disagreeable." Yet she took care to lock herself into her room before she broke the seal. It was very short, only a few lines; but she read them through and through, almost aloud, before she could grasp what Mark had meant her to know two whole weeks before. No wonder he had not answered her letters from Bâle.

"MY DEAREST," it ran, "I see at length how it is with you and Kosinski. It would be cruel of me to keep you bound by a chain which must now be a burden. He will not love you more than I do, but no doubt he will make you happier than I could have done. I do not blame you, Audrey; I only set you free, and wish you well.—M. A."

She was roused from her bewilderment of shame and contrition by a knock on her door.

"May I come in?" asked Lady Conyers, and as Audrey opened the door in she came, a tear stealing slowly down each cheek and "The Times" newspaper in her hand.

"Aunt Sophy!" cried Audrey, "you have had bad news, what is it? Mark has written to her too," was her mental conclusion.

"Well, dear," began her aunt, "I have had bad news—very bad news—and it's even worse for you. Such a terrible explanation of dear Mark's silence."

"I know, Aunt Sophy." Audrey's voice sounded strange to herself as she spoke.

"How do you know, my dearest? Does Mark speak of feeling ill in his letter? Oh, it must have been awfully sudden,

and I wonder Mr. Kosinski, after all his professions, has not written."

"Oh, Aunt Sophy," said the girl, "I had rather Mr. Kosinski did not write, I—I—" Then how was it that her eye fell on the first column of the paper which Lady Conyers had laid on the table? A name caught her eye—she paused and read: "On the fourteenth inst., at Heidelberg, of acute inflammation of the brain, Mark Anstruther, M.A."

"You see, darling," said Lady Conyers, "his illness must have begun almost before we left—that was the eighth, you know. Oh, if we had only stayed another day and helped to nurse him." But Audrey said nothing, she laid her head down on the table with a weary moan, feeling as guilty as if a jury had just pronounced against her the terrible verdict, "Wilful Murder."

A few weeks after, when Mark's papers were arranged and sent to England, she received a half written letter which had been found among them. It was dated the evening after they had seen him last.

"I have just seen Kosinski," he wrote. "I think it may perhaps be well to tell you what I have just learnt from him. He is engaged to be married. Forgive me for putting it so bluntly, but my head is all in a whirl. I didn't feel very happy before, but now I can't pull things right in my mind at all. . . . Shall I ever see you again, or was my letter . . ."

There and thus it broke off; and that was how the last act of the sad little drama came to an end.

How long Kosinski managed to defer his marriage, and whether he and his Princess Olga were happy it is not within the power of this historian to narrate.

NOTE.

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